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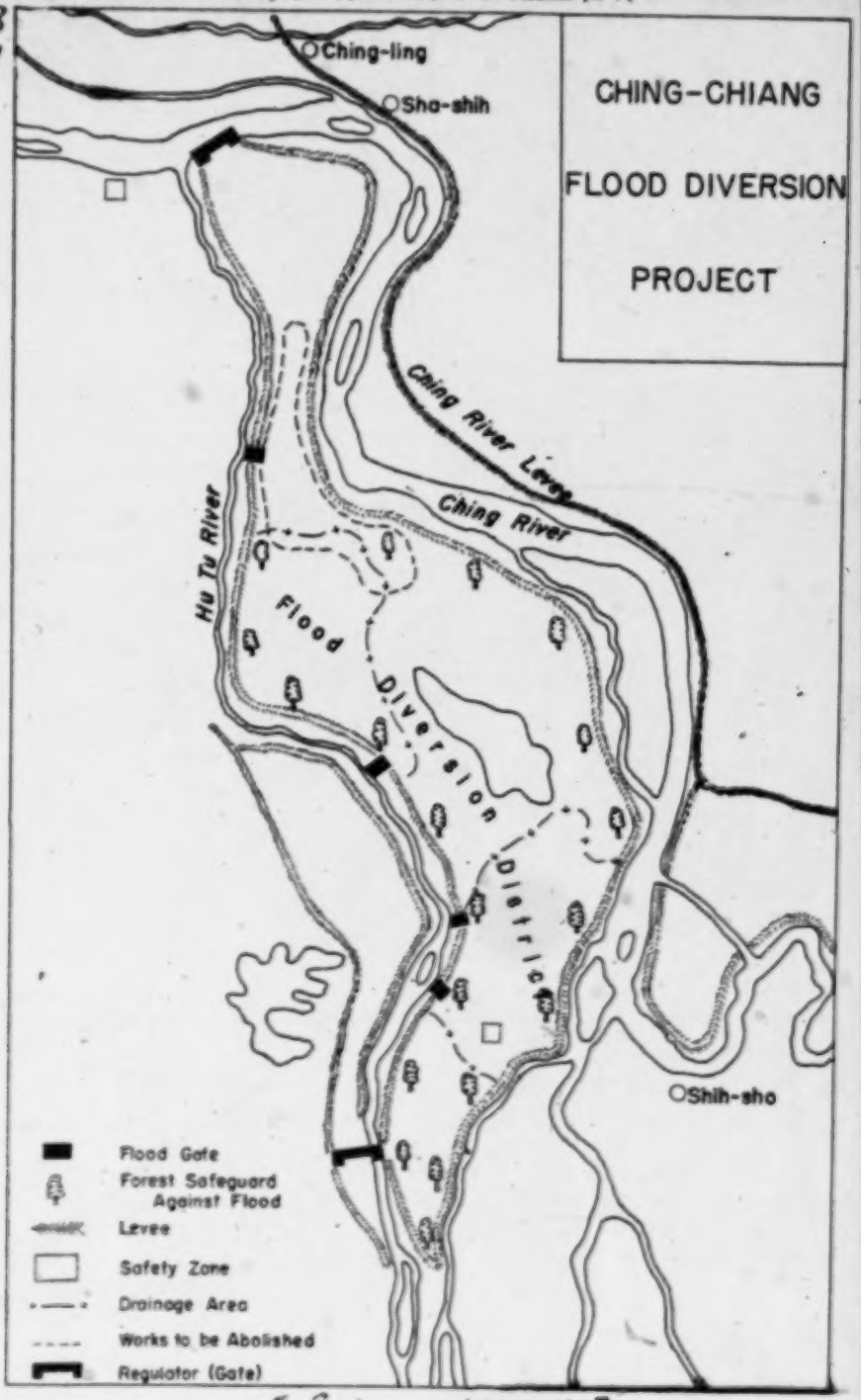

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youths scattered throughout the Central-South provinces. Workers in these institutions are more or less restricted to their place of detention. There is no official account of the location and number of prisons. However, according to 1948 statistics, there were 556 prisons and detention houses in the Central-South provinces.[6] Since the 1954 regulations governing forced labor provide for the establishment of detention houses at the hsien level, it may be assumed that there are a minimum of 664 prisons and detention houses in the 618 hsien and 46 municipalities of the area. The actual number is likely to be appreciably larger. On the other hand, units of "reform-through-labor" corps are highly mobile. Subject to the overall control of the national Ministry of Public Security and its agencies, they may be transferred to places where cheap mass labor may be used, and are often found on important construction sites within the Central-South. Some of the activities in which forced labor has been engaged will be briefly described in the following sections.

II. THE CHING-CHIANG PROJECT (HUPEH AND HUNAN)

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The section of the Yangtze between Chih-chiang in Hupeh and Ch'eng-ling'chi in Hunan, also known as the Ching-chiang, is the site of a major water-

6. Chung-hua Min-kuo T'ung-chi Nien-chien [Statistical Yearbook of China], Nanking, Bureau of Statistics, 1948, p. 392.

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conservation project in Central-South China in which mass labor has been employed. A 133-kilometer (about 83 miles) dyke had been built under the Nationalists, which served to protect some seven million mou (about 1.05 million acres) of farm land, with a population of three million, against the annual flood in August-September. Known as the "life line" of the people, the dyke had fallen into disrepair. Accordingly, strengthening of the original dyke became the first part of the Ching-chiang project under the Communists. The second part of the project consisted of the construction of a large flood-water reservoir (projected capacity, 5.5 billion cubic meters or about 194 billion cubic feet) east of the Hu-tu River and west of the Ching-chiang.[7]

The directive to proceed with the harnessing of the Ching-chiang was issued by the Central-South Military and Political Committee on March 15, 1952. At the same time, it was announced that "voluntary" labor, meaning "unpaid" labor as a rule, would be recruited as was the case in the Hwai River project.[8] In addition, flood victims and refugees, as well as the army, were called upon to take part. The army was assigned to dredge the Huang-t'ien (Yellow Sky) Lake, one of the most difficult parts of the project. The

7. Ch'ih-se K'ung-pu-hsia Ti Hu-pei [Hupeh Under the Red Terror], Taipei, Chung-yang wei-yüan-hui ti-liu-tsu, October, 1954, p. 22.

8. Hwai River Project is discussed in the East China Region study.

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entire labor force was organized in the fashion of an army, directed by General Headquarters and Command posts which were in turn supervised by a Flood Control Committee.

Working conditions at the Ching-chiang project may be glimpsed from Communist press reports extolling the project workers' achievements. One such passage reads: "Right after lunch, the fighters went back to work. When their primitive tools broke down, they just jumped into the bone-chilling water and dug out the sticky mud with their bare hands. On the eleventh day (from the beginning of the project), they worked past midnight, but returned to work the following day in spite of their exhaustion."[9] Another report states: "When the tempo of work was stepped up, the workers had only one meal a day, and they worked day and night for seven consecutive days...On one occasion, workers on the Hu-tu River did not have enough time to place wooden blocks on the river bed, and one whole company jumped into the river to block the sliding of the mud."[10] "Some of the fighters formed three-man teams. One person would lie down on the mud serving as a dredge, the other two would pile mud on him and in this way drag the mud out of the river bed. Besides the man's two twinkling eyes, there was no other sign of human life."[11]

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9. Ch'ang-chiang Jih-pao, March 16, 1952.
10. Ibid., March 26, 1952.
11. Ibid., June 21, 1952.

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Work on the Ching-chiang project commenced on April 5, 1952, and the first part of the plan was completed on June 20 of the same year. The volume of earth excavation totaled 23.1 million cubic meters,[12] approximately equivalent to over 20 million man-days, taking into account the almost complete absence of construction machinery. However, since further construction and annual maintenance and repair in view of the recurrent floods have had to be carried out, the continued employment of mass labor on the same general construction site may be expected.

III. LABOR CONTINGENTS IN HIGHWAY AND RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION (KWANGTUNG AND KWANGSI)

In the building of railways and highways both civilian labor and inactive troops are also used. According to a central government directive of March 31, 1951, civilians may be conscripted to work on highways at the rate of ten man-days a year. They have to supply their own tools and food and are given no monetary remuneration.[13] Only two railways have been built in the Central-South provinces since 1950, one from Lai-pin to Mu-nan-kuan (formerly Chen-nan-kuan) in Kwangsi, the other from Li-t'ang in Kwangsi to Chan-chiang (Kuang-chou-wan) in Kwangtung. Although highway construction has been concentrated in Northwest and Southwest China, some lines have also been built with mass labor in the Central-South, including the lines from Mei-hsien

12. Ronald Hsia, The Role of Labor-Intensive Investment Projects in China's Capital Formation, Cambridge, Mass., Center for Internat'l Studies, M.I.T., summer, 1954, p. 90.

13. [See following page.]